

ing of the fourth century that an ecclesiastical toriaa would think any allusion to it unnecess The argument from silence is never absolutely elusive, but the reticence of Eusebius in 326 at 1 warrants a strong suspicion that the legend had then crystallised itself into its final shape.

Of even greater importance are the extraordi discrepancies between the versions of Eusebius Lactantius. Lactantius wrote his treatise *On Deaths of the Persecutors* very shortly after the b; of the Milvian Bridge, and it has a special v; therefore, as containing the earliest account of vision. The author, who was the tutor of the peror's son, Crispus, must have known all there to be known of the incident, for he lived in the clc intimacy with the court circle. We should fidently expect, therefore, that the author who re verbatim the conversation of Diocletian and Gal< in the penetralia of the palace of Nicomedia w be fully aware of what took place in full vie¹ Constantine's army.

What then is the version of Lactantius? that just before the battle of the Milvian Bri Constantine was warned in a dream to have divine sign of the cross (*cceleste signum*) inscribe the shields of his soldiers before leading themt< attack. He did as he was bidden, and the lette with one of the bars slightly bent—thus, -f-form the sacred monogram, was placed upor legionaries' shields. Such is the legend in its eai guise. There is not a word about Constant anxiety and searching of soul The event is pl<